

INCREASED CONSUMPTION OF AND ADDICTION TO MARIJUANA BY ADULTS AND KIDS

TO: MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
RE: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 1085 AN ACT CONCERNING THE
LEGALIZATION AND REGULATION OF THE RETAIL SALE OF MARIJUANA.

My name is William Huhn, a resident of Guilford, Ct. 06437. I am the spokesman for CT Smart Approaches to Marijuana, a statewide coalition opposed to legalization of retail MJ. I am also a member of Guilford DAY, a local coalition committed to prevention of teen abuse of alcohol and drugs in Guilford. This is testimony in opposition to SB 1085.

1) INCREASE IN MARIJUANA CONSUMPTION IN COLORADO 2014 – 2017

A report released by the Colorado Department of Revenue contains information on consumption that will shock Connecticut's legislators, *Market Size and Demand for Marijuana in Colorado, 2017 Market Update*,
<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/MED%20Demand%20and%20Market%20Study%2020082018.pdf>.

2014 131.1 Metric Tons

2017 208.6 Metric Tons

The report estimates that Colorado adult marijuana consumption increased from 131.1 metric tons in 2014 to 208.6 metric tons in 2017. The huge increase is not surprising, considering the impact of commercialization, with increased access and advertising.

Total regulated production in 2017 was 340 metric tons. The report attributes the 129 Metric Ton difference in production and local adult consumption to use by teens, illegal exports across the state borders, increased inventories by users, and discarded waste. (I speculate that the Colorado Department of Revenue did not wish to make specific estimates of illegal use by teens and illegal cross border sales because the data is embarrassing to the

state political leaders.) Likewise the report ignores any estimates of illegal black market sales that would document additional illegal activity.

The increase in consumption does not indicate a windfall for the state tax revenues, because at the same time, the sales prices fell 62%.

2) INCREASE IN ADULT MARIJUANA ADDICTION IN COLORADO IN 2014 – 2017.

2014 111,550 “Heavy Users”

2017 206,000 “Heavy Users”

The Report also contains shocking information on the growth of adult marijuana addiction in the state since legalization. In 2014, there were 111,550 adult “heavy users”, a euphemism for “addicts”. At the end of 2017, Colorado had 206,000 adult “heavy users” of marijuana. Virtually all the “heavy users” are addicted, using marijuana every day, in large quantities. In 2017, the “heavy users” consumed 82% of the marijuana used in Colorado. So in three years, Colorado added 94,000 people who suffer the consequences of marijuana addiction. The dollar costs of this additional addiction to the state are substantial. In addition, consider the life disruption of the 94,000 new addicts, the impact on their parents, their spouses, their children, and their workplace. And consider the people who will move on from marijuana addiction to other, even more damaging substances, such as cocaine, crystal meth and heroin. The social costs of commercializing marijuana far outweigh, both in dollars and pain, the potential tax revenue from legalization.

- 3) Teen Use- The states that have legalized retail marijuana have much higher use by teens than those which have not.

PAST MONTH USAGE 12-17 years old, 2016, 2017 Source SAMHSA.gov, National Survey on Drug Use and Health

10 States with highest teen 30 day MJ use

- 1) Vermont – **Legalized** 10.75%
- 2) Oregon - **Legalized** -10.35%
- 3) Maine –**Legalized** -9.88%
- 4) New Mexico – Med MJ -9.74%
- 5) RI - Med MJ -9.49%
- 6) Colo – **Legalized** – 9.02%
- 7) Washington (state)- **Legalized** -8.96%
- 8) Mass.- **Legalized** - 8.91%
- 9) Alaska – **Legalized**- 8.84%
- 10) Nevada- **Legalized** – 8.82%

10 States with lowest teen 30 day MJ use

- 41) West Virginia -5.45%
- 42) Georgia - 5.39%
- 43)Oklahoma -5.38%
- 44)New Jersey Med. MJ - 5.16%
- 45)Kansas - 5.16%
- 46) Iowa - 5.11%
- 47) Mississippi - 5.05%
- 48) No. Dakota - 4.99%
- 49) Texas - 4.86%
- 50) Utah - 4.71%

One of the saddest aspects of the legalization movement is the promotion of marijuana abuse as a risk-free, “recreational” activity, a “healthy” one. The industry ignores the substantial body of research on the brain impacts of marijuana, and especially the risks for adolescents. Such risks are real, and the damage is real.

It is not necessary to sort out the statistics in the states that have legalized marijuana to understand what will happen in Connecticut. It is common sense to know that legalization will increase teen use. The MJ corporations are aiming this at kids. They characterize MJ use as **“recreational”**. Kids will assume that the legislature would not legalize MJ unless it is safe. And increased supplies and access definitely will lead to increased use by all ages, including kids. And then there is all the media attention and the advertising, which we all know works. And the candy, and the brownies, and the packaging for kids. Big money is at stake and you all must know that the corporations behind this are willing to lie to you when they assert that teen MJ use will not increase following legalization.